

## University of Richmond UR Scholarship Repository

---

Honors Theses

Student Research

---

Spring 1969

# 1960 : the dilemma of Adlai Stevenson

Robert A. Kester

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/honors-theses>

---

### Recommended Citation

Kester, Robert A., "1960 : the dilemma of Adlai Stevenson" (1969). *Honors Theses*. Paper 270.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).



1960: THE DILEMMA  
OF  
ADLAI STEVENSON

by  
Robert A. Kester

Honors Thesis

May, 1969

## I

The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61, seemed to many Americans to be an "era of good feeling." The harsh divisions over the Korean War and McCarthyism had been healed, and the country enjoyed peace and prosperity; "I like Ike" was more than just a political slogan--it was a national sentiment.

Yet, to the liberals in America, Eisenhower seemed to be merely a latter-day McKinley. To the liberals, this peace and prosperity was a euphemism for the stagnation and drift caused by the inaction of the Eisenhower Administration.

With a growing urban and racial crisis, the President's sole domestic concern was achieving a balanced budget. For all the grandiose Cold War rhetoric of John Foster Dulles, the Atlantic alliance had been weakened, and Communism appeared to be making dangerous inroads in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the areas of education, scientific achievement, and economic growth, America was lagging behind the Soviet Union. In an age which cried out for bold, creative action, the U. S. Government responded like a tired, flabby businessman.

As the decade came to a close, there was a certain uneasiness about U. S. goals, or what was generally called "national

purpose." Questions were raised as to whether America's abundant material wealth had produced a softness in the national character.

Diplomat George F. Kennan delivered a speech in 1959 which was indicative of liberal thinking. Discussing the present condition of the U. S. A., he made a somber statement:

If you ask me. . .whether a country in the state this country is in today. . . has, over the long run, good chances of competing with a purposeful, serious, and disciplined society such as that of the Soviet Union, I must say that the answer is "no."1

So, to most American liberals, with their terrible sense of urgency, the only person to lead the U. S. out of this quagmire of inaction and complacency was the man described by Senator Eugene McCarthy as the "prophet" of the 1950's: Adlai E. Stevenson.

## II

In December, 1956, Adlai Stevenson stated publicly: "I will not again run for the Presidency."<sup>2</sup> At the time, that statement seemed academic, as Stevenson had just suffered a second crushing defeat.

During the years following 1956, Stevenson's political activities were largely confined to speaking at Democratic Party functions to pay off the Party debt and to serving on the Democratic Advisory Council, which set forth policy alternatives to the Republican Administration. On the whole, though, he devoted his time to his lucrative law practice.

However, his old supporters were beginning to stir. As leader of the Party in the Fifties, Stevenson had inspired an almost religious devotion from liberal Democrats. These people were not professional politicians; they were, generally speaking, people who had been drawn into politics in 1952, had labored tirelessly for Stevenson in two campaigns and were prepared to do so again. It was here that Stevenson had a strong base of support for a possible candidacy.

In 1959, "Draft Stevenson" clubs were formed in six states and in the District of Columbia.<sup>3</sup> During this period, formal sort of organization was set up by Stevenson

supporters across the nation: from Wisconsin, whose Democratic organization had always been strongly for Stevenson, James Doyle gave supervisory advice to the "Draft Stevenson" clubs in the country; in New York, the reform Democrats, closely tied to Eleanor Roosevelt and Herbert Lehman, hired William Attwood (foreign editor of Look magazine) to research and prepare speech material for a possible Stevenson candidacy; in the Los Angeles area, film producer Dore Schary raised funds to promote Stevenson; and in Washington, D. C., lawyer George Ball and Senator A. S. Mike Monroney of Oklahoma formulated the basic strategy to win the Democratic nomination for Stevenson.<sup>4</sup>

The backers of the "Draft Stevenson" movement knew that there was no scarcity of competition for the Democratic nomination. The Stevenson supporters felt, however, that each of the declared--or potential--candidates had certain liabilities which would be hard to overcome:

- 1) Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, a dedicated liberal, was regarded as a wild-eyed radical by conservative Democrats and was anathema to the South;
- 2) Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts had unlimited financial resources and was a proven vote-getter in the industrial Northeast, but it was felt that his youth (42), religion (Catholic), and lack of experience would hinder him in the South and West;
- 3) Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri was an expert on national defense but largely incoherent on any other issue, and he had no grass-roots following;
- 4) Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, the powerful Majority Leader of the Senate,

was believed to be a regional candidate, having very little support outside the Southern and border states.

None of these men possessed the national appeal, stature, or prestige of Stevenson, nor did any have his experience in domestic and foreign affairs. The Stevenson strategists decided to present their man as the mature, experienced statesman as opposed to these pygmy politicians interested in mere votes. Ball and Monroney wanted Stevenson to be the liberal voice of the Democratic Party, defining positions on the various issues, while the others engaged in bitter intra-party fighting.<sup>5</sup>

Stevenson was more inclined to discuss policies than politics anyway. Early in 1960, he took a stand on two controversial issues, stating that he favored compulsory arbitration in labor disputes,<sup>6</sup> and that he favored admission of Red China to the United Nations ("It is clear that no general control of disarmament has any value unless it includes China, and it is difficult to see how China can accept international control when it is not, formally, a member of international society").<sup>7</sup> In February, Stevenson embarked on a two-month "self-education" tour of Latin America.

He was aware that 1960 represented his last opportunity to be President, yet he remained curiously aloof, not actively working for the nomination, allowing Ball and Monroney to struggle as best they could. Why was this? First of all, Stevenson took seriously his 1956 statement that he would not

seek the Presidency again; he had restated this many times to party leaders since then. Thus, he felt pledged to a position of neutrality.

Secondly, he was unwilling to go through the ordeal of waging an intra-party struggle for the nomination. In 1952, Stevenson, then the Governor of Illinois, had been drafted by the convention--perhaps the only genuine draft in this century; in 1956, alarmed at the policies of the Eisenhower Administration and convinced that he alone possessed sufficient weight to challenge the President, Stevenson sought and won the nomination again, but only after a bruising battle in the primaries and with various party leaders. He was determined not to campaign for the nomination again; however, as a close friend said: "Deep down he wants it. But he wants the convention to come to him."<sup>8</sup>

Senator Monroney described the dilemma in which Stevenson found himself. Stevenson thought that he must honor his neutrality pledge, but, because he hoped for a draft by the convention, he would not disavow the efforts of those who were working for his nomination. "The first commitment prevented an active candidacy. The second commitment prevented a graceful withdrawal. Our cause was to founder solely on this dilemma."<sup>9</sup> So Stevenson did nothing.

In planning their tactics, Stevenson's supporters rightly judged Kennedy to be the greatest threat to their man's chances. Their strategy therefore centered around a "stop



Kennedy" movement. Kennedy, to overcome his handicaps of youth and religion, <sup>HAD TO GO</sup> ~~must go~~ to the convention in Los Angeles with the image of an irresistible winner, having a string of primary victories behind him. Humphrey and Kennedy were to be opponents in several spring primaries. Even if Humphrey won all of his primaries, which was highly unlikely, he still could not win the nomination; on the other hand, if Kennedy could be upset in just one primary, it might destroy his "winner" image. Based on this reasoning, Stevenson's supporters gave financial aid to Humphrey, hoping that he could frustrate Kennedy and thereby benefit Stevenson.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately for them, their plans went awry. Kennedy beat Humphrey rather decisively in Wisconsin--Humphrey's own backyard--and then gave Humphrey a terrible beating in West Virginia; as a result of his humiliating trouncing there, Humphrey withdrew from the Presidential race. Within ten days after Humphrey's withdrawal, Kennedy coasted to victories in Nebraska, Maryland, and Oregon.<sup>11</sup>

Stevenson, in the meantime, had returned from South America in April and had castigated the Eisenhower Administration for its neglect of the area. A few days after his return, he spoke at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville on the eve of Jefferson's birthday. There he compared the Jeffersonian ideals with the America of 1960 and gave a scathing indictment of the Republican Administration: "Our foreign policy has been dominated by sterile anti-Communism and wishful thinking, our domestic policy by fear of inflation and

mistrust of government."<sup>12</sup> Stevenson went on to ask

why we have lost our once unquestioned military superiority;  
 why we have repeatedly allowed the Soviets to seize the diplomatic initiative;  
 why we have faltered in the fight for disarmament;  
 why we are not providing our children with the education to which they are entitled;  
 why--nearly a century after the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments--all of our citizens have still not been guaranteed the right to vote;  
 why we spend billions of dollars storing surplus food when one-third of humanity goes to bed hungry;  
 why we have not formulated an economic development program geared to the world-wide passion for economic growth;  
 why we have failed to win the confidence and respect of the billions of impatient people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America;  
 why millions of Americans lead blighted lives in our spreading urban slums;  
 why we have fewer doctors per capita than we did fifty years ago and pay more for our medical care than ever before;  
 why we spent more money last year on tranquilizers than on space exploration, and more on leisure than on learning;  
 why the richest nation in the history of the world cannot support the public services and facilities we must have not only for world power but for national growth and opportunity?<sup>13</sup>

To anyone who doubts Stevenson's impact on the Democratic Party, this catalogue of demands was to be the artillery for John Kennedy's successful assault of the White House.

However, Stevenson might as well have been speaking in a vacuum, as Kennedy seemed assured of the nomination after his primary victories. But Premier Khrushchev cast a dark shadow on Kennedy's chances and greatly strengthened Stevenson's cause.

Khrushchev had made a spectacular visit to America in 1959--the first Soviet ruler ever to do so--and had a congenial meeting with Eisenhower at the President's retreat at Camp David. Khrushchev invited Eisenhower to visit Russia, and the two men agreed to meet with British Prime Minister Macmillan and French President de Gaulle to discuss Berlin, arms control, and other troublesome issues; it was decided <sup>AT PARIS</sup> that the summit conference would be held in Paris in May, 1960.

On May 5, 1960--less than a fortnight before the meeting--Khrushchev announced in Moscow that an American plane, a U-2, had been brought down in Russia. The U. S. State Department and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration said that it must have been a weather research plane which accidentally strayed off course. Having caught the American government in a lie, Khrushchev announced on May 7 that the plane had been 1200 miles inside Russian territory and that the pilot of the plane was alive and had confessed to being on a spy mission; still, Khrushchev refused to blame President Eisenhower, saying instead that the Pentagon was behind the action. The State Department conceded that the plane was on an espionage mission but added that the flight had not been authorized by "higher authorities" (i.e., the President). Eisenhower, apparently ~~apparently~~ insulted by the assertions that he was unaware of what was going on in the U. S. government, issued a statement accepting full responsibility for the flight; not only that, but he indicated that such flights

would continue. Then the President ordered a world-wide alert of U. S. combat forces.

When the "Big Four" gathered in Paris, the atmosphere was tense. At the first meeting on May 16, Khrushchev demanded that Eisenhower publicly apologize for the U-2 flight and promise that there would be no such occurrences in the future. Eisenhower refused; Khrushchev publicly withdrew the invitation to visit Russia and announced that no fruitful conference could take place until a new President of the United States had been elected. Calling a press conference later, Khrushchev--in the most violent display of public temper since Hitler's tirades a generation before--accused the U. S. of bad faith and insulted Eisenhower with virtually every epithet he could summon up. In addition, he threatened to destroy the U. S. missile bases and drive the West out of Berlin.

#### TESTIFYING

On May 16, Stevenson was in Washington to testify before a Senate committee on the need for televised debates during the Presidential campaign. Even while he was testifying, word had reached the U. S. of the acrimonious end of the summit conference; when he left the hearing room, Stevenson was mobbed by newsmen asking his political plans. He then met with Lyndon Johnson and other Democratic Congressional leaders who told him that, due to the international situation, he might once again be the Democratic candidate for President.<sup>14</sup>

Afterwards, Stevenson conferred with Senator Monroney. Monroney asked that Stevenson continue to speak out on the vital issues and that he do nothing to hinder the "Draft Stevenson" movement. Stevenson agreed.<sup>15</sup> The U-2 crisis had indeed enhanced Stevenson's chances and diminished Kennedy's, for ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> crisis had prompted people to wonder whether Kennedy was too inexperienced for the great responsibilities of the Presidency.

The events in Paris and the humiliation Eisenhower had been forced to undergo had also created a clamor for national unity. Stevenson was infuriated, for he felt that whenever the Eisenhower Administration committed a blunder, the Republicans immediately attempted to stifle criticism by appealing for "national unity."

Consequently, speaking at the Cook County Democratic dinner in Chicago on May 19, Stevenson discussed the U-2 crisis and the Paris summit meeting. He deplored the boorish behavior of Khrushchev and blamed him for wrecking the meeting, but he went on to say that there were certain "hard, inescapable facts" which could not be ignored: Khrushchev had wrecked the summit but the American government's clumsy mistakes had given him the "crowbar and sledgehammer" with which to do it.

"We cannot sweep this whole sorry mess under the rug in the name of national unity," he stated, and he charged further

. . .that this administration had played into Khrushchev's hands; that if Khrushchev wanted to wreck the conference, our government made it possible; that the administration acutely

embarrassed our allies and endangered our bases; that they have helped make successful negotiations with the Russians--negotiations that are vital to our survival--impossible so long as they are in power.<sup>16</sup>

This speech aroused a storm of controversy: Stevenson was accused of appeasement and/~~f~~or treason.<sup>17</sup> But he had forced a discussion of the issue.

In fact, he was praised by many for having the moral courage to speak his thoughts. Some newspapers such as the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Denver Post, Milwaukee Journal, and New York Post called for his nomination.<sup>18</sup> So did Walter Lippmann, the dean of American political commentators, whose influence among liberals was enormous; Lippmann stated that a Stevenson-Kennedy ticket would be the most viable alternative to the Republicans. He said that

Stevenson has been the successful governor of a big state, has had considerable experience in diplomacy, has had a deep indoctrination in American affairs in two grueling campaigns against an unbeatable opponent, and, all in all, is greatly respected in all the corners of the globe.<sup>19</sup>

In keeping with <sup>THE</sup> "statesman" image his followers were promoting, Stevenson, in a speech on June 1, announced a "grand strategy for peace":

- a) abandon the Dulles concept of "massive retaliation" for a more flexible military response;
- b) strengthen the political and economic unity of NATO by establishing an Atlantic Council;
- c) Pool the financial and technical resources of the Atlantic community to aid the under-developed world;

- d) work for "general and complete" disarmament, beginning with a suspension of nuclear testing;
- e) show the world what a vigorous democracy can do, by having the Federal government tackle the urgent problems of education, housing, health, urban renewal, civil rights, etc.<sup>20</sup>

Stevenson was presenting this as a Democratic program, but it struck some--including the Kennedys--as being a Stevenson program. This impression was confirmed when, a few days later, James Doyle formally announced the formation of a "Draft Stevenson" organization. By the end of the month, "Draft Stevenson" groups existed in forty-two states, and money was flowing in to pay for newspaper advertisements and campaign literature.<sup>21</sup>

However, it is now necessary to examine Stevenson's relationship with John F. Kennedy.

### III

Stevenson and Kennedy had not known each other intimately before 1960, but their relations had always been friendly. Indeed, Kennedy, as a young freshman Senator, had placed Stevenson's name in nomination at the 1956 convention. However, in 1960, the two men were rivals, and their cordial relations could not help but suffer.

Kennedy, since 1956, had set his sights on 1960 as the time for his drive for power. Accordingly, he had built an impressive political organization which worked for the single purpose of electing John Kennedy President in 1960. Under the able direction of his younger brother Robert, this organization was, in terms of financial backing, unstinting work, personal loyalty, and sheer political know-how, unparalleled in American political history.

Kennedy's adroit touch as a politician was in contrast to Stevenson's inept political efforts. Stevenson, contrary to popular thought, was not politically naive; he just had a personal distaste for politics. His real love was public affairs and policy issues. But, as journalist Theodore H. White has pointed out, in America, public affairs and politics are inescapably bound together. White compared Stevenson's



unrealistic attitude--love of issues and indifference to politics--to that of a man who deeply loves a woman but hates sex.<sup>22</sup>

As stated above, Stevenson hoped the convention would come to him, as it had in 1952. He failed to realize that the political situation in 1960 was radically different from 1952. Then, Stevenson had unquestionably been the "indispensable man": there was a genuine deadlock, and he was regarded as the best qualified man to be President and the only Democrat who could run a strong race against General Eisenhower. Now, in 1960, Kennedy was far ahead of the other candidates in delegate votes, Stevenson was a two-time loser, and, while Stevenson may well have been the best qualified man to be President, it was by no means certain that he could run a stronger race against the G.O.P. than Kennedy.

Still, despite his lead, Kennedy had long worried about Stevenson's "sleeping candidacy."<sup>23</sup> Kennedy was trying to win the nomination as the liberal candidate, but he knew that Stevenson had a strong following in the liberal wing of the Party. So Kennedy's hope was to induce Stevenson to formally withdraw<sup>FORMALLY</sup> from contention and thus leave the liberal wing open to <sup>HIM</sup> Kennedy.

Kennedy knew that Stevenson's train of thought had turned increasingly over the years to foreign relations and that, if he could not be President, Stevenson desperately wanted to be Secretary of State. Kennedy played on this desire without letup to win Stevenson over to him.

In April, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., was sent to tell Stevenson that Kennedy would feel "certain obligations" to him <sup>IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS</sup> ~~if he were to support Kennedy.~~<sup>24</sup> Several law partners of Stevenson who were Kennedy supporters were constantly urging Stevenson to be 'realistic': support Kennedy and become Secretary of State.<sup>25</sup> During the Oregon primary campaign, Kennedy was quoted as saying that he "assumed" that any Democratic Administration would have Stevenson as Secretary of State.<sup>26</sup> Stevenson still would not come into the Kennedy camp.

Thus, Kennedy stopped by Stevenson's home in Libertyville, Illinois, on his way back from Oregon. He planned to offer Stevenson a quid pro quo deal: if Stevenson would formally withdraw from the race, announce his support for Kennedy, and, hopefully, place Kennedy's name in nomination at the convention, then he--Kennedy--would promise Stevenson the post of Secretary of State in the Kennedy cabinet. Newton Minow, a law partner of Stevenson and later Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, told Kennedy that such a proposal would be regarded by Stevenson as a bribe and would only harden him in his opposition.<sup>27</sup> As it was, Kennedy asked for his support and was refused.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>EXPLAINED HIS DECISION TO</sup>  
Stevenson ~~told~~ Schlesinger ~~why he had refused~~ Kennedy:  
"It would look as if I were jumping on the bandwagon. Everybody would say, 'There's the deal we told you about.' It would look as if I were angling for a job."<sup>29</sup> There were also two

other factors which strongly motivated Stevenson: his hope of getting nomination himself and his low opinion of Kennedy.

During the course of 1960, Stevenson had come to regard Kennedy as a brash upstart. He realized that Kennedy had great potential, but he thought that Kennedy lacked mature judgment and, especially, humility; in addition, he deplored what he considered to be Kennedy's ruthless pursuit of power. Stevenson referred to Kennedy on one occasion as an "arrogant young man."<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, Kennedy had lowered his opinion of Stevenson. Although he respected Stevenson's ideas and intellectual capacity, Kennedy felt that he was soft and namby-pamby, lacking the toughness and powers of decision necessary for an effective leader. Furthermore, he was angered by Stevenson's lofty, above-the-battle pose; he thought that Stevenson, through hypocrisy, was trying to deny him the goal for which he had labored so strenuously.

The Kennedy camp was increasingly apprehensive about Stevenson as the July convention drew closer. It was not at all certain that Kennedy had enough delegate votes to win the nomination, and an endorsement from Stevenson would surely tip the scales for ~~Kennedy~~<sup>him</sup>. Hence, Kennedy was determined to bring Stevenson over to his side.

Previously, Kennedy had extended the carrot to Stevenson; now he intended to apply the stick. Having invited several close friends of Stevenson to dinner at his Georgetown home

in June, Kennedy informed them that he was now undecided as to whom he would appoint Secretary of State, and he said pointedly that Stevenson had better join the ~~KENNEDY~~ bandwagon or he would learn to his regret that he had made "a big mistake."<sup>31</sup> This could not be taken as an idle threat, as the Kennedys had already achieved a formidable reputation for rewarding friends and punishing enemies.

Stevenson, at this same time, was being advised either to declare himself in the race or out of it; that this position of neutrality would not win him the nomination, and <sup>THAT</sup> it was winning only contempt and hostility from the Kennedys. Stevenson refused to change his position.<sup>32</sup>

#### IV

This is not the place for a detailed study of the political machinations at the Democratic convention in Los Angeles. Stevenson's efforts to win the nomination can be described simply as ineffectual.

Kennedy came to the convention far in the lead of the other contenders; but he had little more than 600 votes out of the 761 needed to win. Since his foremost asset was his image as a "winner", Kennedy knew that he must win on the first ballot or he would not win at all.

Stevenson's strategists were also aware of this ~~fact~~. As their early strategy had been to help Humphrey beat Kennedy in the primaries, their strategy now was to deny Kennedy a first ballot victory and deadlock the convention. With each succeeding ballot, Kennedy's strength would decline; the convention would have to turn to another man. Who would he be? Symington, who had no popular support? Johnson, who was vigorously opposed by the liberal and Northern Democrats? It was believed that the convention would turn to Stevenson, the only one with the truly national stature of a President.

The Stevenson forces did not intend to enlist the support of the party professionals; they hoped to emulate the miracle

of 1940 when Wendell Willkie received the Republican nomination by a stampede of popular pressure. There were heavy pro-Stevenson demonstrations around the Sports Arena where the convention was meeting,<sup>33</sup> the galleries were packed with Stevenson supporters, and the delegates were deluged with telegrams urging them to support Stevenson.<sup>34</sup>

The main barrier to the success of the Stevenson movement remained Stevenson himself. A prominent delegate remarked that "if Adlai had declared as a candidate, he would be unbeatable now."<sup>35</sup> However, except for a statement early in July to the effect that he would accept the nomination if he was drafted,<sup>36</sup> Stevenson still refused to commit himself to the race and passed up a number of opportunities to win.

The crucial delegations from Pennsylvania, California, Minnesota, and New York were known to have strongly pro-Stevenson elements. If Stevenson had indicated a willingness to run, he might have drawn enough votes to prevent a Kennedy victory, but, again, he refused.

When Stevenson appeared on the convention floor on the day before the balloting, bedlam broke out. For twenty minutes delegates and gallery spectators chanted "We want Stevenson!" Stewart Udall, a Kennedy delegate from Arizona and later Secretary of the Interior, said that "after about eight minutes, some of us got a funny feeling in the stomach that it might be Willkie all over again."<sup>37</sup> Stevenson was called to the podium to speak to the crowd, but he spoke only a few pleasantries

and left. As Monroney later wrote, Stevenson "had but to say 'I seek your nomination, I need your help.' He did not say it."<sup>38</sup>

His lackluster performance did not inspire the convention to come to him. Kennedy won his victory on the first ballot; Stevenson received only 79 1/2 votes.<sup>39</sup>

The battle for the nomination left bitterness in the Kennedy camp towards Stevenson, who was always regarded as their greatest threat. When Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., tried to persuade Robert Kennedy to make peace with the Stevensonians, Kennedy cut him off, saying: ". . .Adlai has given us a rough time. . .right now, I don't want to hear anything about the Stevensonians. . . ."40

The bitterness was not one-sided either. Anger was so deep among the die-hard Stevensonians that many of them planned to sit out the election, on the grounds that there was no difference between Kennedy and Richard Nixon, the Republican candidate. Stevenson, though, had become convinced of Kennedy's liberalism, and, since he despised Nixon, he attempted to rectify the situation. In September and October, Stevenson delivered over seventy speeches across the country to the faithful, telling them that there was indeed a difference between Kennedy and Nixon, that Kennedy stood for the principles for which they fought in 1952 and 1956. In this task, he was largely successful.

Stevenson may have lost the battle (i.e., the Presidency), but he won the war, in the sense that his ideas became the accepted thinking by Americans of both parties. One has only to look at the platforms of the respective parties in 1960 to ascertain Stevenson's profound influence: both called for the suspension of nuclear testing, both stressed greater technical and economic aid to the underdeveloped nations, and the Democratic platform stressed international arms control<sup>41</sup>--all Stevenson proposals which had earlier been scorned as "soft on Communism."

Stevenson's influence could also be seen in the rhetoric employed by John Kennedy during the campaign. During the Truman years, the Democratic Party had followed a campaign policy of 'bread and circuses', as exemplified in the slogan, "you never had it so good." Stevenson, in the period of 1952-60, spoke on a far different level, saying that Americans must be self-critical and disciplined to be the moral leaders of the free world. He hammered on this theme despite--or because of--the easy complacency of the 1950's. By 1960, the American people were ready to listen, if not to Stevenson, to Kennedy.

It is interesting to compare the rhetoric of the two men:

Stevenson, 1952--

The ordeal of the Twentieth Century--the bloodiest, most turbulent era of the Christian age--is far from over. Sacrifice, patience, understanding, and implacable purpose may be our lot for years to come. Let's face it. Let's talk sense to the American people. Let's tell them the truth,



that there are no gains without pains, that we are now on the eve of great decisions, not easy decisions. . . .<sup>42</sup>

Kennedy, 1960--

The old era is ending. The old ways will not do. . . the problems are not solved and the battles are not all won--and we stand today on the edge of a New Frontier. . . But the New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises--it is a set of challenges. It sums up, not what I intend to offer the American people, but what I intend to ask of them. It appeals to their pride, not their pocketbooks--it holds out the promise of more sacrifice instead of more security.<sup>43</sup>

Kennedy, of course, won in November, and Stevenson paid for his "big mistake." Having previously "assumed" that Stevenson was the best qualified man to be Secretary of State, Kennedy now suddenly discovered that Stevenson was "too controversial" for the post.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Stevenson received the subordinate position of Ambassador to the United Nations, while the obscure Dean Rusk was chosen to head the State Department. A Kennedy intimate remarked that if Stevenson had supported Kennedy before the convention, "he could have had anything. . . He could have been Secretary of State. He could have even been Vice-President."<sup>45</sup>

The remaining years of Stevenson's life (as U. N. Ambassador) were filled with bitterness and frustration. However, this study ends with 1960.

It is clear in retrospect that Stevenson's vacillation throughout 1960 ruined his chances of becoming either President or Secretary of State. If he desired to be President, then he should have fought for the nomination; if he desired rather to be Secretary of State, then he should have supported Kennedy. From a purely practical point-of-view, Stevenson's political performance was pitiful.

In addition, the selfish implications of his actions (or non-actions) cannot be ignored. Since he clearly did not intend to make any effort to win the nomination and was fairly certain that Kennedy would win,<sup>46</sup> it is difficult to understand how, in good conscience, he could have allowed so many people to have given so freely of their time, efforts and money in his behalf.

In the long run, however, Stevenson's contributions to American history and politics ~~were~~<sup>ARE</sup> far from slight. During the dark, shameful period of McCarthyism, he--almost alone among U. S. political leaders--held up the light of reason and tolerance; his articulate criticisms of the Dulles foreign policy have been proven by time to be valid; and he laid the groundwork for Kennedy's New Frontier and Johnson's Great

Society. In his thinking on major issues, Stevenson was years ahead of his time. But would his ideas alone have made him a great President?

An outstanding President must combine the roles of statesman<sup>5</sup> and pragmatic politician, as is seen most clearly in the cases of Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt. Could Stevenson have successfully played the two roles? Could Stevenson have persuaded Congress and the general public to register approval of his prescient ideas?

Perhaps, in the final analysis, Stevenson's greatest contribution would not have been in the exercise of power but in the role which was allotted him: critic, educator, "prophet."

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade - and after (New York, 1960), pp. 342-343.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth S. Davis, The Politics of Honor (New York, 1967), p. 357.

<sup>3</sup>Alden Whitman, Adlai E. Stevenson: Politician, Diplomat, Friend (New York, 1965), p. 195.

<sup>4</sup>Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960 (New York, 1964), p. 57.

<sup>5</sup>William Attwood, "Pencils, Pads, and Chronic Stamina," As We Knew Adlai, ed. by Edward P. Doyle (New York, 1966), p. 160.

<sup>6</sup>Whitman, p. 195.

<sup>7</sup>Stuart G. Brown, Conscience in Politics: Adlai E. Stevenson in the 1950's (Clinton, Mass., 1961), p. 266.

<sup>8</sup>White, p. 56.

<sup>9</sup>A. S. Mike Monroney, "The Plot Against Adlai," As We Knew Adlai, pp. 250-251.

<sup>10</sup>White, p. 115.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 142 n.

<sup>12</sup>"Stevenson Brands Policies of G.O.P 'Stupid and Sterile,'" New York Times (April 13, 1960), Vol. CIX, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Monroney, pp. 246-247.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>16</sup>"Stevenson Holds U. S. to Blame Too," New York Times (May 20, 1960), Vol. CIX, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>For reactions to his speech, see May 21 and May 22 issues of New York Times, p. 1 on both dates; also "Pursuit of Peace," Time, LXXV (June 6, 1960), pp. 15-16.

<sup>18</sup>S. G. Brown, pp. 284-289.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>20</sup>"Stevenson Urges Creation of Special Peace Agency," New York Times (June 2, 1960), Vol. CIX, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup>White, p. 147.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>23</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days (Boston, 1965), p. 17.

<sup>24</sup>Davis, p. 408.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>26</sup>"Democrats Urge President to Air Paris 'Blunder,'" New York Times (May 21, 1960), Vol. CIX, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Schlesinger, pp. 24-25.

<sup>28</sup>White, pp. 170-171.

<sup>29</sup>Schlesinger, p. 24.

<sup>30</sup>Attwood, p. 162.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Davis, pp. 423-424.

<sup>33</sup>White, pp. 195-197.

<sup>34</sup>Brown, p. 295.

<sup>35</sup>Schlesinger, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup>Whitman, p. 203.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>38</sup>Monroney, pp. 252-253.

<sup>39</sup>White, p. 203 n.

<sup>40</sup>Schlesinger, p. 39.

<sup>41</sup>Brown, pp. 290-291.

<sup>42</sup>Adlai E. Stevenson, Major Campaign Speeches, 1952  
(New York, 1953), p. 10.

<sup>43</sup>White, p. 213.

<sup>44</sup>Schlesinger, p. 138.

<sup>45</sup>Whitman, p. 201.

<sup>46</sup>Attwood, p. 163.

## Sources

### A. PRIMARY

Attwood, William. "Pencils, Pads, and Chronic Stamina," As We Knew Adlai, ed. by Edward P. Doyle. New York: Harper & Row, 1966, pp. 154-168.

This book is a collection of sentimental reminiscences by various people who knew Stevenson. But it does contain some pertinent information. This particular section is valuable because it was written by a man who served as Stevenson's speech-writer in 1960, and it gives insight into the Stevenson-Kennedy animus.

"Democrats Urge President to Air Paris 'Blunders.'" New York Times (May 21, 1960).

This story contains Kennedy's remarks in Oregon that he "assumed" Stevenson would be Secretary of State in a Democratic Administration.

"Farley Condemns Stevenson Stand." New York Times (May 22, 1960).

This story is indicative of Conservative reaction to Stevenson's May 19 speech on the U-2 crisis, saying that he was an "apostle of appeasement."

Kennedy, John F. The Strategy of Peace, ed. by Allan Nevins. New York: Popular Library, 1961.

Interesting, in that it is a gathering of Kennedy's "liberal" position papers on the major issues of 1960.

Monroney, A. S. Mike. "The Plot Against Adlai," As We Knew Adlai, pp. 244-253.

Monroney's remarks are invaluable to any study of Stevenson in 1960, as he presents the difficulties of the pro-Stevenson forces in securing the nomination.

"Pursuit of Peace." Time, LXXV (June 6, 1960), pp. 15-16.

Here is another article which presents the conservative reaction to Stevenson's May 19 speech.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. A Thousand Days. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965.

This book represents Schlesinger's contribution to the deification of John Kennedy. As both Stevenson and Kennedy were Schlesinger heroes, he attempts to gloss over their differences whenever possible. But the book contains a number of remarks and opinions (concerning the 1960 election) unavailable elsewhere.

Sorenson, Theodore C. Kennedy. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Sorenson was Kennedy's most intimate adviser (except for Robert Kennedy), and naturally, the book is polemical. It sheds little light on the Kennedy-Stevenson relationship. However, Sorenson does mirror the animosity of the Kennedy camp towards Stevenson when he says coldly that Stevenson was "never seriously considered" (p. 271) for the State Dept.-- despite evidence from a number of primary sources to the contrary.

Stevenson, Adlai E. "Eloquent Guides to American Aims." Life, Vol. 48 (May 30, 1960), p. 87 and pp. 94-102.

This article is indicative of the concern over "National purpose" in 1959-90.

\_\_\_\_\_. Major Campaign Speeches, 1952. New York: Random House, 1953.

This collection of speeches from the remarkable 1952 campaign contains eloquence of a sort reminiscent of Lincoln and Wilson.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Our Plight in Latin America." Look, Vol. 24 (Nov. 22, 1960), pp. 104-114.

Based on his Latin American tour in February-April, 1960, Stevenson recorded his observations and suggestions: the Latin Americans must clean their own houses (e.g., bring land reform and end aristocratic privilege), but the U. S. could help by supporting "free and democratic societies" and by marshaling the resources of the Western Hemisphere to attack poverty and illiteracy.



"Stevenson Brands Policies of G.O.P. 'Stupid and Sterile.'" New York Times (April 13, 1960).

This article contains some of Stevenson's remarks at the University of Virginia.

"Stevenson Holds the U. S. to Blame, Too." New York Times (May 20, 1960).

Contains Stevenson's speech at the Cook County Democratic dinner on May 19.

"Stevenson Urges Creation of Special Peace Agency." New York Times (June 2, 1960).

Contains Stevenson's "grand strategy for peace."

White, Theodore H. The Making of the President 1960. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1964.

A brilliant analysis and coverage of the 1960 election, this book was indispensable in studying 1960.

#### B. SECONDARY

"After the Summit Collapse." Life, Vol. 48 (May 30, 1960), p. 28B.

In an editorial, Life says that "there is some truth" in Stevenson's charges against the Administration over the U-2 crisis.

Brown, Stuart G. Conscience in Politics: Adlai E. Stevenson in the 1950's. Clinton, Massachusetts: Syracuse University Press, 1961.

This is a penetrating examination of Stevenson's leadership of the Democratic Party and his positions on the issues of the 1950's. A very solid work; no study of Stevenson would be complete without reference to this work.

Burns, James M. John Kennedy: A Political Profile. New York: Avon Division (Hearst Corp.), 1961.

An objective, well-balanced study of Kennedy's career up to 1960.

Davis, Kenneth S. The Politics of Honor. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967.

At the present time, this is the definitive biography of Stevenson. Very well written, it is an admiring study, but it pulls no punches --in the Stevenson-Kennedy relations or in Stevenson's last years.

Evans, Rowland and Novak, Robert. Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power. New York: The New American Library, 1966.

A fascinating study of Johnson from 1948 to 1966, covering his years as Senate Majority Leader, Vice-President, and his first 2 1/2 years as President. It is coldly objective which is probably why Johnson reportedly disapproved of it.

Goldman, Eric F. The Crucial Decade - and After. New York: Vintage Books, 1960.

A highly entertaining look at the years 1945-60. It is written from the liberal point-of-view and in an anecdotal fashion.

Leuchtenburg, William E. The Great Age of Change, Vol. 12 of The Life History of the United States. New York: Time, Inc., 1964.

A harsh view of the Eisenhower Administration; Leuchtenburg, a liberal, is particularly scathing in pointing out the failures of his second term.

Muller, Herbert J. Adlai Stevenson: A Study in Values. New York, Evanston, London: Harper & Row, 1967.

A fairly good biography, but not nearly as good as Davis.

"Secretary of State." The New Republic, Vol. 143 (Nov. 14, 1960), pp. 1-7.

This noted periodical reflects the liberal trend of thought in its call for Kennedy to appoint either Stevenson or Chester Bowles to the State Dept.

Whitman, Alden. Adlai E. Stevenson: Politician, Diplomat, Friend. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

A mediocre biography, but it contains a few pertinent facts and remarks.